

(e) Doppler effect; Doppler shift of electromagnetic radiation

(f) Doppler equation $\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} \approx \frac{\Delta f}{f} \approx \frac{v}{c}$ for a source of electromagnetic radiation moving relative to an observer

(6) M - Define the Doppler effect
(7) S - Explain the Doppler shift of electromagnetic radiation
(8) C - Apply the Doppler equation for moving sources of electromagnetic radiation.

The Doppler effect

STARTER: Try this question on parallax.
Ex: Why is there a limit to the parallax method? what are the alternatives?

The star Arcturus has a parallax of 0.09 arc seconds. How far is it from the Earth?
The parallax technique can be used successfully to determine the distances of stars to a maximum distance of 100 pc. Calculate the parallax, in arc seconds, for this maximum distance.

a $d = \frac{1}{p} = \frac{1}{0.09} = 11.1 \approx 11$ pc

b $p = \frac{1}{d} = \frac{1}{100} = 0.01$ arc seconds

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Practice questions

1. Calculate the distance of 1 light-year (ly) in metres.
2. Figure 1 shows an isosceles triangle drawn by a student to show what is meant by a distance of 1 parsec (pc).
3. A recent supernova, SN2011fe, in the Pinwheel galaxy, M101, released 10^{41} J of energy. The supernova is 2.1×10^4 ly away.
4. Calculate the distance of this supernova in pc.
5. Our Sun radiates energy at a rate of 4×10^{26} W. Estimate the time in years that it would take the Sun to release the same energy as the supernova SN2011fe.
6. One of the possible remnants of a supernova event is a black hole. State two properties of a black hole.

Question	Answer	Marks
(1) distance = $9.5 \times 10^{15} \times 3.16 \times 10^8$ (9 marks)		1
(2) distance = 3.26×10^{16} m and 3.26×10^{13} km		1
(3) distance = $9.5 \times 10^{15} \times 3.16 \times 10^8$ m = 3.0×10^{24} m		1
(4) distance in pc = $\frac{3.0 \times 10^{24}}{3.26 \times 10^{16}}$ = 9.2×10^7 pc		1
(5) time = $\frac{4 \times 10^{41}}{4 \times 10^{26}}$ s = 1×10^{15} s = 3.2×10^7 years		1
(6) Any one from: • Very dense / infinite density / very small / singularity. • Very strong gravitational field therefore light cannot escape from it. • Curvature space / space-time / metric tensor.		1

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Activity: What is the doppler effect?

Check you understand - what are we doing today?

Extension: How does it relate to study of cosmology?

Why are we using today's technology to study the universe?

What information can be gained about distant objects using the Doppler effect?

Why does the intensity of light from a distant galaxy decrease as the distance increases?

Why does this indicate that the universe is expanding?

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Activity.

1. Define the Doppler effect. Use a labelled diagram to show this effect.

	Red Shift	Blue shift
Relative motion	away from observer	towards observer
Change in λ	increase	decrease
Reason for changing λ	Wave fronts are stretched out by relative motion away	Wave front are compressed by relative motion towards
Change in f	decrease	increase
Observation that leads to determination of shift type	Viewing absorption spectrum. Absorption lines shifted towards the red end of the spectrum (in comparison to the same element's absorption lines in the lab.	Viewing absorption spectrum. Absorption lines shifted towards the blue end of the spectrum (in comparison to the same element's absorption lines in the lab.

Ex: For last row, consider the difficulties in determining shift, if the colour of a star is determined by temperature

Ex: How can you calculate the speed of recession of a star?

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Doppler equation

$\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} \approx \frac{\Delta f}{f} \approx \frac{v}{c}$

$\Delta\lambda$ - change in wavelength / m
 λ - Source wavelength / m
 Δf - change in frequency / Hz
 f - Source frequency / Hz
 v - Relative velocity / m/s
 c - Speed of light in a vacuum / m/s

The equation shows that the faster the relative motion the greater the observed change in wavelength

Worked example: Speed of a galaxy

In the laboratory an absorption line of hydrogen is observed at a wavelength of 656.3 nm. In a distant galaxy the same absorption line is observed at 658.1 nm. Calculate the speed of the galaxy and state whether it is moving towards or away from the Earth.

Step 1: Calculate the change in the wavelength

$\Delta\lambda = 658.1 - 656.3 = 1.8$ nm

The wavelength observed from the galaxy is longer than the wavelength in the laboratory, so the galaxy must be receding. The spectral line has been red-shifted.

Step 2: The Doppler equation $\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} \approx \frac{v}{c}$ can be rearranged to give $v = \frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} \times c$

Therefore $v = \frac{1.8 \times 10^{-9}}{656.3 \times 10^{-9}} \times 3.0 \times 10^8 = 7.2 \times 10^7$ m/s = 72000 km/s (2 d.p.)

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Activity: Complete the summary questions on the Doppler effect.

Ex: Try the stretch and challenge sheet.

Plenary:

In the laboratory, a particular spectral line from hydrogen atoms has a wavelength of 2.1 cm. Calculate the change in the wavelength of the same spectral line from hydrogen atoms of a galaxy receding from the Earth at a speed of 8000 km s⁻¹

Answer

$\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} = \frac{v}{c}$

$\Delta\lambda = \frac{v}{c} \times \lambda = \frac{8000 \times 10^3}{3.0 \times 10^8} \times 2.1$ cm

$\Delta\lambda = 0.056$ cm

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